

## Message Text

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62

ACTION NEA-10

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R 311332Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8782

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 6897

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IS, AU

SUBJECT: ISRAELI RACTION TO CHANCELLOR KREISKY'S REMARKS

REFS: VIENNA 9150, VIENNA 9057

BEGIN SUMMARY: MEDIA COVERAGE OF CHANCELLOR KREISKY'S REMARKS AND CLARIFICATION RE ISRAEL, THE JEWISH PEOPLE AND THE WARTIME ROLE OF FREEDOM PARTY CHAIRMAN PETER REFLECTS ISRAELI SENSITIVITY TO KREISKY'S JEWISH BACKGROUND AND AUSTRIAN POSITION ON MIDDLE EAST ISSUES. COINCIDENCE OF TIMING WITH UN ANTI-ZIONIST VOTE ON RESOLUTION ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO HIGHLY CRITICAL TONE OF PUBLIC REACTION TO KREISKY'S REMARKS. END SUMMARY

1. REMARKS ATTRIBUTED LAST WEEK TO AUSTRIAN CHANCELLOR BRUNO KREISKY HAVE CAUSED A MINOR DIPLOMATIC RIFT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND AUSTRIA. KREISKY WAS QUOTED HERE AS SAYING THAT "THERE WAS SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE THAT NO JEWISH PEOPLE EXISTS, ONLY A COMMUNITY OF FAITH WHICH BECAME A COMMUNITY OF FATE."

2. ISRAELI PRESS HAS GIVEN FACTUAL COVERAGE TO KREISKY/  
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WEISENTHAL EXCHANGE, ALLON MEETING WITH AUSTRIAN

AMBASSADOR FOOR CLARIFICATION OF KREISKY'S REMARKS, AND COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT END OF OCTOBER 27 KREISKY-DAGAN MEETING. ACCORDING TO ISRAELI PRESS, COMMUNIQUE STATED INTER ALIA THAT "IN ORDER TO GUARD AGAINST MISUNDERSTANDINGS, KREISKY MADE CLEAR HE NEVER QUESTIONED THE EXISTENCE OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL AND OF ITS PEOPLE." IT ADDED THAT AUSTRIA HAD REPEATEDLY INTERCEDED IN FAVOR OF A PEACEFUL SOLUTION OF THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT AND WOULD RESPECT "THE NATIONAL EXISTENCE OF ALL, INCLUDING THE ISRAELI PEOPLE."

3. FOLLOWING ARE REPRESENTATIVE PRESS REACTIONS. JERUSALEM POST EDITORIAL OCTOBER 24 NOTED THAT KREISKY "UNLIKE MANY OTHER LEADING JEWISH STATESMEN, HAS NEVER LEARNED HOW TO LIVE WITH HIS 'JEWISH COMPLEX.' WHENEVER HE IS REMINDED OF HIS JEWISH BIRTH, HE ABANDONS HIS POLITICAL WISDOM AND REASON, AND LEANING OVER BACKWARD, ATTEMPTS TO PROVE HIS TOTAL SEPARATION FROM EVERYTHING JEWISH...IT IS A PITY THAT THE AUSTRIAN CHANCELLOR AND EUROPEAN STATESMAN CANNOT BETTER ADVISE BRUNO KREISKY WHO WAS BORN JEWISH, WHOSE JEWISH BROTHER LIVES IN JERUSALEM, AND WHO REACHED THE TOP IN AUSTRIAN POLITICS DESPITE THIS 'HANDICAP'."

4. JERUSALEM POST OCTOBER 31 CARRIES ARTICLE BY HEBREW UNIVERSITY LAW PROFESSOR FEINBERG ("AN ANSWER TO KREISKY") IN WHICH HE WONDERES WHAT PROMPTED KREISKY TO STATE-PRECISELY WHEN THE ARAB STATES ARE LAUNCHING IN THE UN AN UNBRIDLED ATTACK ON THE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE--THAT THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS JEWISH PEOPLE. "BY DOING SO KREISKY GAVE HIS SUPPORT TO ONE OF THE FALLACIOUS ARGUEMENTS WHICH THE ARABS ADVANCE IN THEIR FIGHT AGAINST THE STATE OF ISRAEL AND ITS SURVIVAL...THE JEWISH PEOPLE AND THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT HAVE NEVER ATTEMPTED TO CONSTRAIN PERSONS OF JEWISH ORIGIN INTO IDENTIFYING THEMSELVES WITH THEIR PEOPLE. BUT THEY ARE CERTAINLY ENTITLED TO ASK JEWS WHO HAVE CHOSEN THE PATH OF ASSIMILATION TO ABSTAIN FROM REGARDING THEMSELVES AS QUALIFIED TO APPEAR AS EXPERTS AND ARBITERS ON JEWISH AFFAIRS, AND DOING DAMAGE TO THE VITAL INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE FROM WHOM THEY SPRING."

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5. MAARIV EDITORIAL OCTOBER 28 WRITES THAT "ISRAEL HAS REACHED YET ANOTHER COMPROMISE--THIS TIME WITH...CHANCELLOR KREISKY, WHO GRACIOUSLY ADMITTED THAT THE STATE OF ISRAEL EXISTS...BUT THE QUESTION OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE WAS NOT DISCUSSED BETWEEN THE AUSTRIAN CHANCELLOR AND THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR IN VIENNA...." MAARIV CONCLUDES THAT "ONE QUESTION REMAINS UNANSWERED: IF THERE IS NO

JEWISH PEOPLE, WHAT IS THE AUSTRIAN CHANCELLOR TRYING TO  
ESCAPE FROM?"

6. COMMENT: FACT THAT KREISKY HIMSELF IS A JEW,  
TOGETHER WITH HIS POSITION ON THE MIDDLE EAST DISPUTE IN  
GENERAL AND ON THE PALESTINIANS IN PARTICULAR EXPLAINS  
THE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE GIVEN BY THE ISRAELI MEDIA TO THE  
INCIDENT. KREISKY'S ACTION IN OCTOBER 1973, WHEN HE  
ORDERED THE CLOSURE OF SCHOENAU IMMIGRATION CENTER  
FOLLOWING AN ATTACK BY ARAB TERRORISTS, IS WELL REMEMBERED  
HERE. THE FACT THAT THE INCIDENT COINCIDES WITH CONSIDERA-  
TION BY THE UN OF THE ANTI-ZIONIST RESOLUTION HAS GIVEN  
ADDED SIGNIFICANCE TO THE CONTROVERSY FOR ISRAELIS.  
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